

*Clovis Maksoud, Lebanese Socialist
(Revisionist) Request Article on Role of
Parties in National Liberation Movements
& Governments.*

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LEFT FORCES IN LIBERATED AFRO-ASIA

MUST NOT LOSE MASS CONTINUUM

BLITZ of February 7 last initiated a debate on the subject of the contribution of Nehru to World Thought and invited contributions on this controversial subject.

Making Nehru's criticism of Marxism as an out-dated philosophy and the Soviet Academician Yudin's reply the base of our appraisal, we sought to present the Nehru Doctrine as it is being implemented in India as a synthesis of Lenin and Gandhi in the context of the 20th century Asian-African revolution and, consequently, an advance upon classical 19th century Marxism.

The first contribution received on this subject comes from Prof. Clovis Maksoud, an outstanding Arab intellectual and socialist. He wrote this for BLITZ after discussing his thesis with Prime Minister Nehru at Delhi.

YUDIN'S CRITICISM OF NEHRU &

KHRUSHCHEV'S CRITICISM OF NASSER

SHOULD BE VIEWED AS PART OF A

MUTUAL CORRECTIVE FORMULA

Throughout Asia today important ideological problems arise. In many instances, some rely on formulas that have evolved in European contexts and seek to apply them to the Asian framework. The result is that in Asia there develops between certain ideological groups a large measure of unnecessary antagonism.

This is particularly true among the national leaderships, their socialist contingents in the nationalist movements, and the Communist challenges. Between these three, major ideological groups which have in the past, particularly under the imperialist rule, formed a political unity, appear in the aftermath of independence to consider it necessary to break the political unity and operate separately.

Inherent Urge Behind Every Ideology

One of the reasons for such a desire is due to an inherent urge that every ideology must have its own political organisation. Now there is no doubt that this is true in countries where sufficient economic development has been realised and where basic and social institutions have been fairly established. In these circumstances, the interplay of ideological parties seeks to bring about that proximity to perfection which is desirable.

In ~~under~~-developed countries, and particularly in those countries where consolidation of the nationalist objectives paves the way for the building of new society, the concerted efforts of leaderships who have made it possible for the national objective to be realised should remain united until they have built the fundamental ~~institution~~ which renders the prospects of a new society realisable.

This suggestion translated into concrete forms means the following:

It assumes that the national liberation movement built in the respective countries of Asia in the aftermath of independence to change qualitatively the mass dynamic into healthy and purposive dynamic in direct proportion to the extent to which the progressive ideological groups within it remain organisationally united. Now this mass continuum is the dominant characteristic of the political struggle in the recently independent and in the semi-colonial countries.

Effects of Division in Leadership

Invariably, there develops within the national liberation movements ideological differences. These ideological groups maintain a large degree of unity because they consider that their unity is the condition that renders national liberation possible. This correct feeling does not perpetuate itself in the aftermath because no sooner has independence been achieved than every ideological group seeks to put forward its own panacea as absolutely the sole valid one for the country.

The mass continuum witnessing this divergence within the ideological components of the previously united movement supports the nationalist leadership not so much because it is ideologically committed to nationalism to the exclusion of Communism or Socialism,

but it commits itself to the national leadership because a division in the leadership exhausts its dynamic and its political commitment only by inertia.

This has, in fact, happened in many countries of Asia, particularly in India, Malaya, Indonesia and the Arab countries. Yet, because of the very nature of commitment through inertia, this commitment never acquires an antagonistic attitude to the ideological groups which have organisationally broken away from the mass continuum.

The break away might lead, as it did, to political confusion; it might lead to the divestment of the mass continuum of many sources of its dynamic, it might, for a time undermine the socialist purposiveness in genuine national liberation movements; it might further lead the nationalist leadership into ideological positions which reflect the aberrations in the mass continuum rather than the authentic current in it.

Don't Lessen Contact With Mass Continuum

Furthermore, it leads the advanced ideological groups to lessen their contacts with the mass continuum hence lessening the chances of the retransformation of the continuum into a social dynamic; hence their isolation and political sterility. The classical example of this is the status of many socialist parties in Asia.

To free healthy ideological groups from the fate of relative political isolation, it is necessary for them to reconsider their position. To begin with, they must break with the exclusive frame of references and behavioristic categories which are characteristic of the democratic socialist movements in Western Europe.

They must learn to interact with the fundamental realities in their respective countries. To do so would mean that the socialist groups must insist on maintaining their **organic** association with the mass continuum and conceive of their role in it as the accelerator of its social consciousness and of its economic and political regeneration.

To break organisationally from the mass continuum because the leadership is not in full commitment to the objectives of socialism does not at any time mean that the mass continuum consents to the socialist anachronisms with its actual political leadership.

Socialist Party: An Asian Necessity

In fact, within the nationalist movements in Asia, the role of the socialist contingent is to isolate the social anachronisms which a nationalist movement invariably possesses. But when these socialist contingents of the nationalist movements break organisationally without having adequately developed its own ideological formulas, then it risks being considered an alternative rather than an accelerator within the mass movement. One can say that in many cases socialist groups formed themselves into parties immaturely in Asia. This does not mean that a socialist party should not emerge or that it is desirable.

On the contrary, a socialist party is an Asian necessity but a socialist party which emerges as a break from the mass continuum is the unnecessary aspect of Asian politics. An Asian socialist party is the product of the conscious transformation of the national liberation mass movement into a mass continuum dynamically committed to the basic principles of socialism.

The only validity of a socialist party in Asia, and in fact, its relevance becomes apparent when it is able to bring to it the vital sections of the mass continuum. It cannot do so unless it remains within the political frame-work of the mass continuum functioning as an accelerator of the social consciousness within it.

Attempt to Build Up Second Mass Continuum

This brings us to a second important consideration in conscious progressive politics and that is the responsibility of a genuine socialist to the communist challenge. The history of the Asian communist parties and groups is that they have given intermittently a genuine participation in the mass continuum. However, one of the major errors of the communists has been is that they sought in Asia, and perhaps today in Africa, to build up another mass continuum as an alternative to the actual one.

In China, the Communist Party, particularly after the leadership of Mao Tse-Tung, was able to lead the mass continuum of China against the economic and social dislocations. The absence of a direct confrontation with colonial powers made it possible for the Communist Party to lead the Chinese mass continuum which was stimulated into cohesiveness by the social rather than the national stimulus.

Stimulus for a Mass Dynamic

This is not exactly the situation in countries where the primary stimulus for the cohesiveness of the mass movement in its revolutionary aspect and expression has been anti-imperialist.

The stimulus for a mass dynamic is determined by the challenge which confronts it. If it is a direct colonial and imperialist challenge then the responsibility is primarily national liberation. If the challenge is primarily economic then the responsibility is social.

This does not mean that a principally social liberation movement does not confront with imperialist sponsorship or support for its antagonists. Neither does it mean that national liberation movements are not at all times conscious of the social anachronisms which the colonialists and the imperialists rely upon in their attempt to arrest the tide of national liberation. That is why the term primary is used to indicate the nature and characteristics of the stimulus.

Drawback of Asian Communists

Now I have stated that the principal error of the Communists, where the national stimulus has been characteristic, was that they do not at all times and under all circumstances fully commit themselves to the mass continuum except in so far as the mass continuum represent a recruiting ground for the cadres of an alternative mass continuum. This is why the communists in many anti-imperialist struggles have been able to provide the struggle strong and consistent support and make it possible to expedite some of its achievements, but at the same time unable to bring themselves to be an essential part of the national liberation movement and to render the mass continuum as such committed to its ideological formulations.

The only exception to this case is Indo-China. But in other national liberation movements, what has been more evident was that the communist groups have acted in a sectarian and factionalist manner. This is because the communists have, in the same manner as some Asian socialists, used frames of references not organically related to the objective realities in the Asian-African context, and in many instances, have used alien frames of references. This is evident, for example, in the communist party's attitude in Tunisia and Morocco in the latter stages of the nationalist struggle particularly in relation to the trade union movements there. It is also apparent today in the manner in which the Arab Communists have sought to dilute the meaning of the Arab nationalist movement.

Formula of Mutual Corrective

This criticism of the communists does not at all entail an anti-communist position. On the contrary, any position of exclusive anti-Communism invariably leads to the introduction of a right-wing element and renders a healthy movement vulnerable to irrational tendencies and alters the character of a liberation struggle.

Criticism to communism assumes a desire that the Communists should not be excluded from the political framework of a national liberation movement. On the contrary, criticism means a desire to exercise a corrective influence. Unfortunately, some of the Communists do not accept this formulation. Some of the Communists, it must be stated, do accept and welcome it.

But in respect to the formula of mutual corrective between the socialists and the communists, the Communists have not taken a clear position. Until they do so, Communist-Socialist-Nationalist relationship will not be clearly defined.

Admitting the necessity and the desirability of maintaining the political framework of differing ideological groups in the post-independence period because our assessment leads us to the conclusion that in building the foundations of a new society, three ideological groups is necessary. This united political framework becomes unnecessary only when the institutions in society have been sufficiently consolidated and guaranteed. Then the split among ideological groups can translate itself into separate political parties.

Building Foundations of a New Society

The mutual corrective formula as a formula of inter-relationship between various ideological groups accepts that the three major trends--namely the nationalist liberation group the socialist contingent and the Communist contingent--are in the main progressive and that what it seeks is the restoration for the unity of those who have a progressive outlook.

Between them, there may be important differences and conflicts, they might even effectuate ideological raids, or even proceed with mutual recriminations. If these are done on the basis that they objectivise the interplay of opinion and conceive of their respective ideological selves not as ideological finalities in respect to Asian conditions, then the formula of the mutual corrective becomes not only a formula to maintain political unity but also the medium by

which the ultimate ideological formulation to build a progressive and healthy society in Asia and Africa is achieved.

IN THIS LIGHT, YUDIN'S IDEOLOGICAL CRITICISM OF MR. NEHRU'S THEORIES OF ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION SHOULD BE STUDIED AND KHRUSHCHEV'S CRITICISM OF NASSER'S POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD.

Two Alternatives Before Asia and Africa

In Asia and Africa today those who are in the progressive movement, are faced with two alternatives: either mutual antagonism between the ideological groups risking confusion and division in the mass continuum and rendering the body politic vulnerable to irrational and reactionary trends to develop or the formula of the mutual corrective in which neither the socialists nor communists are obsessed by mutual antagonism and where they act within the mass continuum to accelerate progressive consciousness and secure its support. Mutual modification leads to rendering socialism and communism more authentic and more expressive of the conscious will of the Asian-African masses.

Only through the internal development of the mutual corrective formula and its genuine application in ideological relationships can the Asian and African countries hope to exercise a healthy influence on a world level--as a major guarantee for world peace.